

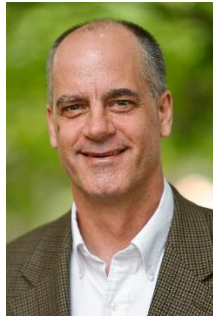


## QUARTERLY MEETING PANELIST BIOS

U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy

Wednesday, June 1, 2022 | 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM ET

Virtual Panel (Zoom Webinar Platform)



**Tony Pipa**

**Senior Fellow**

**Brookings Institute, Center for Sustainable Development**

Tony Pipa is a senior fellow in the Center for Sustainable Development at the Brookings Institution. He launched and leads the initiative Local Leadership on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which works with mayors and local government officials to advance sustainable development globally by solving local problems through application of the SDGs. He is also leading research on the emergence of city diplomacy and the impact of global cooperation among local governments on transnational issues.

Tony also launched and manages the Reimagining Federal Rural Policy initiative, which seeks to modernize and transform U.S. federal policy to enable community and economic development in underserved and economically distressed rural places across the U.S. His analysis and recommendations are informed by successful changes in policy and practice in U.S. investments overseas.

Tony came to Brookings after serving in the U.S. Department of State during the Obama administration as special envoy to the UN to negotiate and adopt the SDGs. He also served in multiple senior policy roles at USAID, ending the administration as chief strategy officer. He has three decades of executive leadership experience in the philanthropic and public sectors addressing poverty and advancing inclusive economic development both in the U.S. and globally. He attended Stanford University, was graduated from Duke University, and earned a Master of Public Administration at the Harvard Kennedy School.



**Christopher Olson**

**Director of Trade & International Affairs**

**City of Houston**

Christopher was appointed by Mayor Sylvester Turner in 2018 to serve as the Director for Trade and International Affairs for the City of Houston. In this role, Christopher leads the City's international business development efforts as well as engagement with foreign governments and international organizations.

Prior to his appointment, Christopher held positions as a diplomat, business consultant, and military officer. With the U.S. Department of State, Christopher had diplomatic postings in the Balkans, South and Central Asia, worked as a program manager in Washington, D.C. supervising programs in Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, and advised U.S. and international business executives on a range of economic, trade, and political issues.

As a business consultant in the private sector, Christopher advised companies on corporate market strategy, organizational structure, and business processes. During his military service Christopher was a U.S. Navy Officer leading large, diverse, cross functional teams. Christopher has supported special



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warfare operations, worked as a staff officer for the Chief of Naval Operations in the Pentagon, and led anti-terrorism and continuity of operations programs.

Christopher is a graduate of Northwestern University with a degree in history and political science and holds a master's degree from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. Prior to joining the City of Houston, Christopher obtained an MBA from Rice University Business School with a focus on strategy and innovation where he was recognized as a Jones Scholar for academic and leadership excellence. Christopher helps lead the World Energy City Partnership network of global cities leading the energy transition, is a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma business honors society, was recognized as a Global Leader of Influence by the World Affairs Council and is active in entrepreneurship and veterans' affairs.



**Vanessa Ibarra**

**Director of International Affairs**

**City of Atlanta**

As Director of International Affairs for the City of Atlanta, Ms. Ibarra advises Mayor Andre Dickens, cabinet members, the airport and City Council on international matters. Under her leadership, the city has strengthened ties with international cities, attracted international events such as the Smart City Expo

Atlanta, Wunderbar Together and the Sustainable Airport Areas International Seminar, grown the Atlanta Christkindl Market, launched the first Women Export University Program in partnership with UPS and the first IoT Living Labs Agtech Challenge, and supported the establishment of the Atlanta Global Studies Center.

Vanessa is a recipient of the French National Order of Merit with the rank of Knight from the President of France, Emmanuel Macron. She is part of the city's Smart Cities Governance Team, the Atlanta Global Studies Center Advisory Board, the Board of the French American Chamber of Commerce, the Francophone-Atlanta Committee, the Georgia Council for International Visitors Board, the Conseillers du Commerce Exterieur de France in Atlanta, and La French Tech Atlanta.

She assists in facilitating trade, economic development, tourism, and cultural initiatives for the City of Atlanta and liaises with local, national and international agencies.



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**Sherry Dowlatshashi**

**Chief Diplomacy & Chief Protocol Officer**

**City of San Antonio**

Sherry serves as Chief Diplomacy & Protocol Officer for the City of San Antonio heading up the Global Engagement Office in the Economic Development Department. She oversees international business, protocol, and official global relationships and the Casa San Antonio, San Antonio's Trade and Foreign Office in Mexico. More specifically, she advises, assists, and supports San Antonio elected officials and executives on matters of international affairs, and is responsible for coordinating foreign travel for the mayor and council as well as planning the visits for high-level foreign dignitaries and the consular & diplomatic corps. Another important part of her work is public engagement with local community business, cultural, civic, and higher education, diaspora and ethnic groups. She works closely with other City of San Antonio departments to support international initiatives or projects including the award-winning San Antonio Sister Cities Program.

Sherry currently serves on a host of boards including the Board of Trustees of the World Affairs Council of San Antonio, the San Antonio Mexico Friendship Council and the San Antonio Mexico Foundation for Education. She is a founding board member of the Roosevelt Library Social Club. Since 2013, she has volunteered in the City of San Antonio's Women's Leadership Mentorship Program and served as a mentor to various professional women in the municipality. Sherry has been inducted in the Spanish Order of Civil Merit with rank of Officer's Cross (*Cruz de Oficial*) and recognized by the Government of Mexico with the prestigious *Ohtli* Award, for her work to promote Spanish and Mexican cultures respectively.

She is the recipient of numerous awards for her outstanding leadership in the Sister Cities International Program, to include the "Service to Society Award" by "Middle East North Africa San Antonio," and was recognized by Dreamvoice in the Notable People of San Antonio. Sherry completed her undergraduate and graduate education in the United Kingdom at the University of Westminster in London and the University of Cambridge. She previously studied abroad in Egypt at Alexandria University and the National Autonomous University of Mexico.